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1 2 3	MATTHEW C. KLASE [SBN 221276] WEBB, KLASE & LEMOND, L.L.C. 1900 The Exchange, S.E. Suite 480 Atlanta, Georgia 30339	CLERK U.C. DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DIST. C. GALIE. LOS ANGELES		
4	Tel: (770) 444-0998 Fax: (770) 444-0271 Matt@WebbLLC.com	B Y		
6	Attorneys for Plaintiff FIGUEROA PROJECT 2, L.L.C.			
7	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT			
8	CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA			
9	FIGUEROA PROJECT 2, L.L.C.,	CENO 8-08508 PAV		
0	Plaintiff,	COMPLAINT AND REQUEST FOR DECLARATORY AND		
1	vs.	NOTION OF THE PROPERTY OF T		
12	CITY OF LOS ANGELES, a California (municipal corporation,	JURY DEMAND		
13	Defendant.) JURY DEMIAND		
14	Borondant.			
15				
16	COMF	PLAINT		
17		FORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF		
18	COMES NOW Plaintiff Figueroa	Project 2, L.L.C. ("Project") and for a		
19	cause of action against Defendant City of Los Angeles, a California municipal			
20	corporation ("City"), hereby alleges as for	ollows:		
21	<u>PAR</u>	<u>TIES</u>		
22	1. Plaintiff Project is a limited	d liability company authorized to do and		
23	doing business in the State of Californ	ia. Project is in the business of leasing		
24	wall space from local property owners for the purpose of posting and operating			
25	advertising signs.			

2. Defendant City is a political subdivision of the State of California located in the County of Los Angeles. The City has enacted and is enforcing a comprehensive set of Sign Regulations.¹

JURISDICTION

- 3. Plaintiff's claims arise under the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, Section 1983 of the Civil Rights Act, and Section 2201 and 2202 of the Declaratory Judgment Act. This Court has original jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331. Plaintiff's state law claims are so related to Plaintiff's federal law claims that this Court has supplemental jurisdiction over the state law claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.
- 4. Defendant is subject to the jurisdiction of this Court and venue is proper against Defendant pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) under the facts and circumstances as alleged herein.

GENERAL FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

5. Within the last few months, Project and the owners of the properties located at (i) 888 S. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, California 90017, (ii) 757 Flower Street, Los Angeles, California 90017, and (iii) 1106 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, California 90015 (collectively referred to as "the subject properties") entered into lease agreements authorizing Project to utilize the walls of the buildings located on the properties for the purpose of displaying advertising signage thereon.

As used herein, the term "Sign Regulations" refers to Chapter I, Article 4.4 of the City Code, and all other City regulations which define, restrict, exempt, prohibit, and/or otherwise regulate signage in the City, including but not limited to Code Sections 91.106 and 91.6201-91.6216.

- 6. After negotiating these leases, Figueroa consulted and reviewed the City Sign Regulations to determine how to apply for sign permits. Figueroa discovered that the signs fall within the City's definition of a "supergraphic sign." See Sign Reg., §§ 14.4.2. Although supergraphic signs are generally banned, City officials have discretion to grant exemptions from this ban without reference to any objective criteria. Furthermore, Figueroa became aware that the Regulations do not place a time limit on the application process, meaning that it could be weeks or even months before Figueroa received a response to its permit application. As such, Figueroa was extremely wary about submitting to the City's permitting process.
- 7. Indeed, Figueroa's concerns regarding the Sign Regulations have already been validated by this Court. In World Wide Rush, LLC v. City of Los Angeles, 563 F. Supp. 2d 1132 (C.D. Cal. 2008), two companies which operate supergraphic signs throughout the City without permits challenged the City's Sign Regulations on the grounds they are unconstitutional speech restrictions. Id. at 1136-37. When the City issued several Orders to Comply seeking the removal of the signs, the plaintiffs sought a preliminary injunction enjoining the City from enforcing its regulations until the case was resolved. Id.
- 8. The Court granted the injunction on the grounds that plaintiffs' success on the merits was likely. Among several holdings rendered in its opinion, the Court determined that several pertinent Sign Regulations, including Section 14.4.4(B)(9) a/k/a the "supergraphic ban" and Section 14.4.4(B)(11) a/k/a the "off-premise ban," were constitutionally deficient because they granted

unfettered discretion to local officials to license speech.² <u>Id.</u> at 1138-52. The Court was particularly disturbed by the many exceptions to the Regulations which allow City officials to authorize certain individuals and entities to maintain otherwise banned signs whenever they deem fit. <u>Id.</u> at 1141-45.

- 9. The Court ultimately preliminarily enjoined the City from enforcing the invalid regulations against the plaintiffs. <u>Id.</u> at 1152.
- 10. Other recent legal precedents have also called the City's Regulations into question. For example, in February 2008, Commissioner John Green sitting as Superior Court Judge in the case of People v. Sedighan, Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 7CA00192, determined that the City of Los Angeles' permitting provisions for supergraphic signs were unconstitutional and void. As the City was a party to this proceeding, it is well aware of this finding. Further, in 2007 the City lost the case of Metro Lights, L.L.C. v. City of Los Angeles, 488 F. Supp. 2d 927 (C.D. Cal. 2006), before this Court.
- 11. Rather than submit to regulations that have already been found by this and other Courts to be constitutionally invalid on multiple occasions, Figueroa retained a professional sign posting company to post "supergraphic" signs on the subject properties.
- 12. Even though its Regulations have been declared unconstitutional, Figueroa is aware that the City continues to enforce these regulations through the issuance of citations. Figueroa fully anticipates that its signs will soon be cited by the City.

² The Court also determined that the City's ban on off-site and supergraphic signs within 2,000 feet of a freeway (Section 14.4.6) violated the <u>Central Hudson</u> test applicable to commercial speech. <u>World Wide Rush</u>, 563 F. Supp. 2d at 1148-52.

13. Figueroa seeks a declaration that the City's Sign Regulations are unconstitutional and an injunction prohibiting the City from enforcing the invalid regulations against it or the property owner at the subject properties.

FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF

First and Fourteenth Amendments

- 14. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations in Paragraphs 1-13 above as if set forth verbatim herein.
- 15. The Sign Regulations are unconstitutional on their face and as applied because they abridge rights secured by the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution and Article I, §§ 2 and 7 of the California Constitution in that they:
 - (a) grant unfettered discretion to City officials to license speech (e.g., Sign Reg., §§ 14.4.4(B)(9), 14.4.4(B)(11), 91.106.3.1, 91.6201.2; 91.6201.2(1)(b));
 - (b) lack requisite procedural safeguards, such as a time limit on the application process (e.g., id. at § 91.106);
 - (c) violate the <u>Central Hudson</u> test on commercial speech, in that they fail to (i) directly advance a substantial governmental interest or (ii) reach no further than necessary to serve that interest (e.g., Sign Reg., §§ 14.4.4(B)(9), 14.4.4(B)(11), 14.4.5, 14.4.6, 91.106.3.1, 91.6201.2; 91.6201.2(1)(b)); and
 - (d) violate equal protection (e.g., Sign Reg., §§ 14.4.4(B)(9), 14.4.4(B)(11), 91.106.3.1, 91.6201.2; 91.6201.2(1)(b)).
- 16. An actual and justiciable controversy has arisen and now exists between Plaintiff and Defendant concerning the unconstitutionality of the Sign

Regulations. A judicial declaration is necessary and appropriate so the parties may ascertain their rights, duties, and obligations with respect to the Sign Regulations.

SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF

Injunctive Relief

- 17. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations in Paragraphs 1-16 above as if set forth verbatim herein.
- 18. Despite the constitutional deprivations referenced above, the City intends to cite the subject signs and attempt to have them removed.
- 19. The City should be enjoined from taking any action to remove the subject signs because:
 - (a) there is a substantial likelihood that Plaintiff will show that the regulations which form the basis of the City's actions are unconstitutional, as has already been determined in the World Wide Rush matter and elsewhere;
 - (b) there is a substantial threat that immediate irreparable injury will result if the City is not restrained, namely the loss of speech rights, which is *per se* an irreparable injury;
 - (c) Plaintiff's loss of speech rights far outweighs any potential harm to the City; and
 - (d) allowing Plaintiff to continue to exercise its speech rights will not disserve the public interest.
- 20. Because Plaintiff has satisfied all of the criteria for preliminary injunctive relief, this Court should restrain and/or enjoin the City from enforcing the Sign Regulations during the pendancy of this case.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment as follows:

- (1) For a judicial declaration and decree that the Sign Regulations are unconstitutional on their face and as applied to Plaintiff, because they violate rights guaranteed by the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the United State Constitution and Article I, §§ 2 and 7 of the California Constitution;
- (2) For this Court to preliminarily and permanently enjoin the City from removing the subject signs;
- (3) For an award of such damages as are authorized by law;
- (4) For an award of attorneys' fees and expenses, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1988;
- (5) For a trial by jury on any issue that should not be resolved by the Court as a matter of law; and
- (6) For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and equitable.

DATED: December 23, 2008

WEBB, KLASE & LEMOND, L.L.C.

By

Matthew C. Klase

Attorneys for Plaintiff Figueroa Project 2, L.L.C.

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	DISTRICT COURT CT OF CALIFORNIA
Figueroa Project 2, L.L.C. PLAINTIFF(S) V.	CASE NUMBER - 08508 PAVELLE
City of Los Angeles, a California municipal corporation,	X
DEFENDANT(S).	SUMMONS >
TO: DEFENDANT(S): City of Los Angeles c/o May	yor Antonio Villaraigosa
A lawsuit has been filed against you.	
must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached ☑ counterclaim ☐ cross-claim or a motion under Rule 1 or motion must be served on the plaintiff's attorney, Ma 1900 The Exchange S.E., Suite 480, Atlanta, GA 30339	2 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer atthew C. Klase , whose address is . If you fail to do so,
judgment by default will be entered against you for the r your answer or motion with the court.	elier demanded in the complaint. You also must file
	Clerk, U.S. District Court
DEC 2 3 2008 Dated:	By: <u>Portalio hongeria</u> Deputy Clerk
	(Seal of the Court)
[Use 60 days if the defendant is the United States or a United States 60 days by Rule 12(a)(3)].	s agency, or is an officer or employee of the United States. Allowed
CV-01A (12/07) SUMM	IONS

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

! (a) PLAINTIFFS (Check box Figueroa Project 2, L.L.C	r if you are representing yourself □))	DEFENDANTS City of Los Angeles, a California municipal corporation			
yourself, provide same.) Manthew C. Klase [SBN 2	dress and Telephone Number. If you 21276], Webb, Klase & Lemond, L. Suite 480, Atlanta, GA 30339 -0271 (fax)		Attorneys (If Known)			
II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION	N (Place an X in one box only.)		HIP OF PRINCIPAL PART in one box for plaintiff and o		Only	
☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	63 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)	Citizen of This S		DEF I Incorporated or P of Business in thi		
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant		Citizen of Another State				
IV. ORIGIN (Place an X in on	e box only.)	Chizzii di Subjet	et of a Foreign Country 3	□ 3 Foreign Nation		
TV. ORIGIN (Place an X in one box only.) 5/1 Original						
V. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT: JURY DEMAND: So Yes No (Check 'Yes' only if demanded in complaint.) CLASS ACTION under F.R.C.P. 23: No No Noney DEMANDED IN COMPLAINT: S VL CAUSE OF ACTION (Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing and write a brief statement of cause. Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity.)						
	ns of the First & Fourteenth Amend	iments to the U.S. Con	stitution.	<u> </u>		
VIL NATURE OF SUIT (Place	e an X in one box only.)				1 	
□ STATUTES □ 400 State Reapportionment □ 410 Antilinst □ 430 Banks and Banking □ 450 Commerce/ICC Rates/etc. □ 460 Deportation □ 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations □ 480 Consumer Credit □ 490 Cable/Sat TV □ 810 Selective Service □ 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange □ 875 Customer Challenge 12 USC 3410 □ 890 Other Statutory Actions □ 891 Agricultural Act □ 892 Economic Stabilization Act □ 893 Environmental Matters □ 894 Energy Allocation Act □ 895 Freedom of Info. Act □ 900 Appeal of Fee Determination Under Equal Access to Justice □ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes	□ 130 Miller Act □ 140 Negotiable Instrument □ 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment □ 151 Medicare Act □ 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loan (Excl. Veterans) □ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits □ 160 Stockholders' Suits □ 190 Other Contract □ 195 Contract Product Liability □ 196 Franchise REAL PROPERTY □ 210 Land Condemnation □ 220 Foreclosure □ 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment □ 245 Tort Product Liability □ 290 All Other Real Property	TORTS PERSONAL INJURY 1310 Airplane 1315 Airplane Product Liability 1320 Assault, Libel & Slander 1330 Fed. Employers' Liability 1340 Marine 1345 Marine Product Liability 1350 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 1360 Other Personal Injury 1362 Personal Injury Med Malpractice 1365 Personal Injury Product Liability 1368 Asbestos Person Injury Product Liability 1369 Asbestos Person Injury Product Liability 1360 Asbestos Person Injury Produ	PROPERTY 1	Other 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition FORFEITURE / PENALTY 610 Agriculture 620 Other Food & Drug 625 Drug Related Seizure of	LABOR 710 Fair Labor Standards Act	

AFTER COMPLETING THE FRONT SIDE OF FORM CY-71, COMPLETE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED BELOW.

CV-71 (05/08)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

Page 1 of 2

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

VIII(a). IDE		this action been prev	riously filed in this court and dismissed, remanded or closed? S No S Yes		
VIII(b). REL	ATED CASES: Have number(s): CV08-50	any cases been previ 66-R; CV07-238-/	iously filed in this court that are related to the present case? No Yes ABC; CV08-04501-GHK (all related to the constitutionality of the City Sign Regulations)		
Civil cases ar	e deemed related if a p	reviously filed case	and the present case:		
			or closely related transactions, happenings, or events; or		
,			n of the same or substantially related or similar questions of law and fact; or		
	□ C. F	or other reasons wor	uld entail substantial duplication of labor if heard by different judges; or		
	□ D. !	nvolve the same pate	ent, trademark or copyright, and one of the factors identified above in a, b or c also is present.		
IX. VENUE:	(When completing the	following informatio	n, use an additional sheet if necessary.)		
(a) List the (County in this District, Core if the government, its	alifornia County out	tside of this District; State if other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACII named plaintiff resides. ees is a named plaintiff. If this box is checked, go to item (b).		
County in thi			California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country		
			Clark County, Nevada		
(b) List the (County in this District; C	California County ou	tside of this District; State if other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACH named defendant resides. ees is a named defendant. If this box is checked, go to item (c).		
		agencies of employ	California Country outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country		
Los Angele			Cantitina County Orisine of this District, State, it can than Cantillar, it is carry		
Los Aligere	s County				
			nside of this District; State if other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACII claim arose. To of the tract of land involved.		
County in th	is District:		California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country		
Los Angele	s County				
			ntura, Santa Barbara, or San Luis Obispo Counties tract of land invoked //		
X. SIGNATI	JRE OF ATTORNEY (OR PRO PER):/	Muttle Maste 12/23/08		
or other	papers as required by law	. This form, approve	vil Cover Sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings ed by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required pursuant to Local Rule 3-1 is not filed of statistics, venue and initiating the civil docket sheet. (For more detailed instructions, see separate instructions sheet.)		
Key to Statist	tical codes relating to So	cial Security Cases:			
	Nature of Suit Code	Abbreviation	Substantive Statement of Cause of Action		
	861	ніа	All claims for health insurance benefits (Medicare) under Title 18, Part A, of the Social Security Act, as amended. Also, include claims by hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, etc., for certification as providers of services under the program. (42 U.S.C. 1935FF(b))		
	862	BL	All claims for "Black Lung" benefits under Title 4, Part B, of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. (30 U.S.C. 923)		
	863	DIWC	All claims filed by insured workers for disability insurance benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended; plus all claims filed for child's insurance benefits based on disability. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))		
	863	DIWW	All claims filed for widows or widowers insurance benefits based on disability under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))		
	864	SSID	All claims for supplemental security income payments based upon disability filed under Title 16 of the Social Security Act, as amended.		
	865	RSI	All claims for retirement (old age) and survivors benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42 U.S.C. (g))		

CV-71 (05/08)

CIVIL COVER SHEET Page 2 of 2